



THE LIBERTARIAN PARTY

Watergate Office Building ♦ 2600 Virginia Avenue, NW, Suite 100 ♦ Washington, DC 20037

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For additional information:

Bill Winter, Director of Communications ♦ (202) 333-0008

Are Libertarians on the brink?

At July 4th convention, party of limited government seeks to tap into voters' "latent libertarianism"

WASHINGTON, DC -- Twenty-five years after a handful of disaffected Democrats, Republicans, and independents met in a Denver living room to start a new political movement, the Libertarian Party is hoping for a breakthrough in 1996.

"This year, our message of a radically smaller government just might start a political bonfire across America," said the party's national chairman Steve Dasbach.

The Libertarians are pinning their hopes on their July 4th - 7th national convention in Washington, DC, which will be broadcast nationwide on C-SPAN; a presidential candidate on the ballot in all 50 states; and a bumper crop of up to 1,000 candidates running for local, state, and federal office.

But most of all, they believe that their 25-year-old anti-government message is finally in tune with the mood of the American public.

"Never in modern American history has there been more anger, distrust, and fear directed at the government -- and more apathy and cynicism about the two older parties," said Dasbach. For example, he noted:

■ 76% of Americans say they "rarely or never trust government to do what is right."
(Americans Talk Issues Foundation survey, July 1995)

■ 39% of Americans say "the government has become so large and powerful it poses an immediate threat to the rights and freedoms of ordinary citizens." (Gallup Poll, May 1995)

■ 67% of Generation X voters say they would be "likely" to vote for a third-party candidate in November. (Youth Vote 96 poll, February 1996)

■ 69% of Americans say "the federal government controls too much of our daily lives."
(Times/Mirror survey, September 1994)

"For the Libertarian Party, 1996 could be our year," predicted Dasbach. "No other party is better positioned to tap into the latent libertarianism of American voters."

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